

Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting – Thursday December 11, 2008 – 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, First Floor, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order – At 12:05 p.m. Chairman Greenblatt called the meeting to order.

2. Attendance and Quorum (6 members required)

Members in attendance: Chair Howard Greenblatt, John Adamian, Kate Mullen, Chris Lyons, Chris Monroe, Bill Knapp, Joan Hughes, Ben Bare, Doug Sacks, Rick Willard and Ken Rizzio.

Members absent: Betty Rosania, Dorcas McHugh, Betty Standish and Brian Silver.

Also in attendance: Bonnie Therrien – Town Manager; Phil Knecht – Planning and Zoning Commission Liaison; Peter Gillespie – Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Denise Bradley – Assistant Planner.

3. Old Business

a. Strategic Plan Update – Goals, Objectives and Strategies 2008 – 2013 – Peter Gillespie stated that he had not carved out time to focus on this effort but that he would set up a Finance Subcommittee meeting to begin making progress.

b. Status Report - Church Street/SDH Streetscape Project – Ribbon Cutting – Howard Greenblatt noted that the event had been postponed due to inclement weather. Peter Gillespie suggested pushing the ribbon cutting out until spring when the backdrop will be more conducive and more progress on the project is complete.

c. Preserve America – Peter Gillespie reported that the group who oversaw the master planning effort has begun meeting again to discuss the implementation of the plan. He noted that this may affect various boards and commissions including the EDIC. Mr. Gillespie stated that they would begin working on the Wayfinding Signage as the first project because the funding is already in place.

d. Horse and Carriage Rides – Peter Gillespie noted that the rides would be operating on the weekends through New Years and that new fees have been put into place.

e. Farmer's Market – Doug Sacks noted that a meeting to discuss this matter is scheduled for December 30th.

4. New Business

a. Budget Status/Freeze – Bonnie Therrien reported that the town is in freeze mode until there is a sense of what the legislature and governor will do. She noted that most towns are in the same mode calling for 10% reductions next year and not filling vacancies.

b. Business Visitation Program – Peter Gillespie requested that the EDIC members continue to complete the visitations and passed out additional packets. Mr. Gillespie discussed the components of the

visitation packets and made note that this is essentially a fact finding effort to identify areas of concern and to compile a business directory. Howard Greenblatt added that while this is a mechanism for creating goodwill, EDIC members making the visitations shouldn't promise anything that can't be delivered.

c. Mixed Use Zoning Regulations – Peter Gillespie reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved the regulation amendments at their December 2, 2008 meeting and noted that there would be a press release on the website.

d. Salute To Business December 3, 2008 – Howard Greenblatt noted that he was proud to make a speech outlining the list of this year's accomplishments and that progress must continue to be made. Rick Willard requested that the EDIC members receive a copy of the Chairman's speech.

e. Façade Improvement Program – Peter Gillespie reported that he had met with Pelton's and they indicated that they do intend to complete the exterior improvements. He noted that while no new applications are pending, the owner's of Bliss Market and Mila Fabrics have both expressed interest in pursuing program funding.

f. Wethersfield Avenue Streetscape Project – Bonnie Therrien reported that she has been attending meetings with the City of Hartford regarding their proposed streetscape project on Wethersfield Avenue that will extend to Jordan Lane. She noted that it is a \$4-5 million project and that while the project is only in the initial stages, funding sources are being actively pursued.

5. Reports -

Town Manager's Report – Bonnie Therrien reported on the following:

- Revaluation appeals
- Chamber of Commerce signed a lease to move to the Keeney in January
- CIP
- \$4-5 million in town bonds will be sold January 22nd
- Fire Marshal retirement
- Progress of the Town Manager Search

Town Council Liaison's Report – No report was given.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report – Phil Knecht reported on the highlights on the December 2, 2008 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Tourism Commission Liaison's Report – No report was given.

Redevelopment Agency Liaison Report – Peter Gillespie reported that only one response for the Fun Zone RFP was received and that it exceeded the cost ceiling. He noted that the RFP would likely have to be more publicly advertised to get the bid necessary.

Chamber of Commerce Liaison's Report – No report was given.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report – Peter Gillespie reported that the Shop Local initiative would be discussed at the next Marketing Subcommittee meeting and that he had received a Tax Abatement application from John Tartaglia for the Assisted Living Facility on Ridge Road.

6. Chairman's Report – The Chairman had nothing additional to report.

6. Sub-Committee Reports -

Marketing and Communications – No report was given.

Financial Strategies – No report was given.

8. Minutes -

9. Next Meeting – January 8, 2009

10. Correspondence

a. Monthly Report

11. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner